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ABSTRACT

This project was conducted to implement a word processing unit of study within the office practice classes at Pottstown (Pennsylvania) Senior High School, using microcomputers. An additional purpose was to provide access to microcomputer accounting applications in the office practice classes. During the project, the following activities were completed: (1) visits to various school districts that were using word processing; (2) review of word processing software; (3) viewing of presentations and sample materials from South-Western and Gregg/McGraw Hill publishing companies; and (4) discussion of the use of word processing instruction by the school's advisory committee. After these procedures had been completed, the business education teachers selected a variety of programs and courseware to be used within the business department. Instruction will be provided to all students enrolled in the secretarial, accounting, and clerical programs. (Supplementary materials developed through the project include a list of competency-based objectives as they apply to word processing instruction; a plan to incorporate word processing into the existing office practice classes; a list of word processing learning materials selected, including both programs and workbook materials; and a list of accounting materials selected, including both programs and workbook materials.) (KC)

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FINAL REPORT

MICROCOMPUTER WORD PROCESSING IMPLEMENTATION
(Contract Number 93-5015)

Joseph G. Rinaldi
Director of Vocational Education

POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

POTTSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

August 1, 1985

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BUREAU OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

VOCATIONAL PROGRAM SUPPORT SERVICES SECTION

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

The Pottstown School District would like to acknowledge the business education departments at the following schools who provided time for our teachers to tour their facilities to learn more about word processing, equipment, and materials: Reading Area High School, Swenson Skill Center, North Penn School District, Methacton School District, Upper Dublin School District, Souderton School District, and the Upper Perkiomen School District. We also wish to thank Mr. Roy Bilger, Gregg/Mc-Graw Hill Publishing Company, and Mr. Eugene Kivett, South-Western Publishing Company for providing samples of various microcomputer applications/workbooks as well as making presentations to our business teachers during in-service.

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ABSTRACT

93-5015: Microcomputer Word Processing Implementation

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$5,000.00 Federal
$9,910.00 Non-Federal
7/1/84 to 6/30/85

The purpose of this project was to implement a word processing unit of study within the office practice classes using the microcomputer. An additional purpose was to provide access to microcomputer accounting applications to the office practice classes.

Objectives

1. To organize a relevant unit of instruction in competency based word processing within the office practice courses.

2. To utilize the microcomputer for competency based word processing instruction and for demonstrations by the accounting teachers.

3. To compile performance objectives that would be included in the office practice classes as they pertain to word processing.

4. To increase computer literacy thereby fulfilling one of the Department of Education's goals of improving public schools.

5. To extend the viability of business education/vocational education as a means to successful employment thereby increasing vocational education's worth to the students and community.

6. To increase the employability of graduating seniors by providing instruction in a state-of-the-art employment classification.

7. To provide for a culmination of the office skills acquired in previous business education courses.

8. To design learning activities that are self-paced, with evaluations of achievement, that can be used with all student abilities.

Outcomes

1. An extraction of competencies were gathered from the V-TECS catalogs as they pertained to the local situation with the advice of business education teachers and the local business education craft advisory committee.

2. Learning activities have been incorporated within the existing office practice classes that will provide for word processing instruction both in theory and in actual application on a microcomputer.

3. Individualized assignments have been selected that will allow students with varied abilities to achieve success with word processing applications.

4. Word Processing learning materials have been selected that will allow the business education teachers to meet their objective of offering a program that will allow all students to attain job competencies. These materials were selected as they related to the competency desired.

5. Accounting applications have been selected that will allow senior accounting students an opportunity to apply accounting theory to a microcomputer based accounting system.

6. An area has been remodeled with the specific purpose of locating a word processing laboratory within the business department office practice rooms.

7. Software has been selected with consideration given to features available within the program, ease of learning, and cost.

8. Instruction will be provided to all students enrolled in the secretarial, accounting, and clerical programs thereby eliminating sex stereotyping implications, and both sexes will participate in the program.

Audience

The resulting reports and curriculum materials are useful to the Bureau of Vocational Education, business educators, and curriculum developers.

Supplementary Materials

1. List of competency based objectives as they apply to word processing instruction.

2. A plan to incorporate word processing into the existing office practice classes.

3. List of word processing learning materials selected including both programs and workbook materials.

4. List of accounting materials selected including both programs and workbook materials.

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Methods

The project largely dealt with a search for (1) microcomputer programs, and (2) learning materials currently being used by other school districts that could be utilized to meet the objectives of the Pottstown School District. In addition, we wanted to review the microcomputer programs available in terms of their (1) features available, (2) ease of use, (3) ease of learning, and (4) cost.

One of the main concerns was to obtain the best educational value for the money being spent. While we know that there are excellent microcomputer word processing programs available, many of those programs are expensive in terms of the excess educational value to be obtained over purchasing a lower-priced program.

The Pottstown School District has completed this successful project by the following procedures:

1. Visitations to various school districts as listed in the acknowledgements. These schools were selected based either upon their known microcomputer usage or their being rated as an exemplary project school.

2. Word processing software reviews were requested from VEIN.

3. Word processing software reviews were utilized from Electronic Learning, March, 1984, pp. 60-65.

4. South-western and Gregg/McGraw Hill Publishing Companies were asked to make presentations of their courseware, and sample materials were made available for teacher use.

5. The Business Education Craft Advisory Committee discussed the use of microcomputers for word processing instruction. A separate meeting was devoted to hands on use of the microcomputers by the community representatives.

After consideration of each of these items, the business education teachers selected a variety of programs and courseware to be used within the business department.

Analysis

Transferrable word processing skills can be taught and learned on a microcomputer word processing system. Many businesses are likewise finding that the microcomputer system provides for word processing applications as well as allowing for more versatile use.

Microcomputers used for word processing teaching applications also allow for use in areas such as accounting, data entry,

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business simulations, keyboarding, and office practice thereby increasing their usefulness to business educators over equipment whose sole purpose is word processing.

Good word processing programs are on the market for reasonable prices. We were encouraged by an InfoWorld, Vol. 5, No. 44, p. 72 article which explained, "Those operating on a shoestring budget can take their pick of over 20 word-processing products that sell for under $75. . . In addition, users need not forego features when they make low cost a purchasing factor. . . You can get good programs for between $50 and $100 that have 80% of the functionality of "Wordstar" at a fraction of the price. . . Just because you pay one-fifth the price doesn't mean you will get one-fifth the functionality."

A review of the VEIN literature indicated that many of the "top-of-the-line" word processing programs may not be suitable for instructional purposes with high school students because of the difficulty involved in getting a command of the system. Programs that have less functionality, but are easier to learn, may be better for teaching entry-level skills.

The publishers of business education learning materials have moved into the computer age. Programs/Courseware are now being made available to business educators through the traditional channels in a variety of subjects.

Conclusions

1. Businesses are increasingly using microcomputers for word processing applications.

2. There are good, inexpensive programs available for word processing applications on the microcomputer.

3. Microcomputers provide more versatility in teaching applications than dedicated word processors.

4. Although educational materials do exist for teaching word processing, most business educators should expect to develop their own learning materials and units of study to suit their own individual needs and situations.

Dissemination

The Pottstown School District Business Education Department welcomes all educators. We are willing to share all of our ideas and materials.

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PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

The business education department, with the assistance of its craft advisory committee, has compiled the following performance objectives as they specifically apply to word processing instruction:

1. Given a transcribing machine, recorded typing instructions and dictation, and a typewriter, the student will transcribe the recorded material. The copy will conform to the typing instructions, convey the intended content, and be submitted within the due date.

2. When given work sheets on word processing theory, the student will be able to complete the work sheets with 100% accuracy using the theory books available in the room. The student will also complete a test with an 80% accuracy level after completing the worksheets.

3. When given a word processing unit, the student will be able to input various letters, reports, and memos; save to disk; and obtain a printout in acceptable style within the due date.

4. When given a word processing unit and an edited copy of a previously typed document, the student will demonstrate editing skills to produce a document in acceptable style in final form within the due date.

5. Given a word processing unit and a mailing list, the student will keyboard all addresses, including corrections, into a master mailing list being stored on disk and obtain a printout within the due date.

6. Given a word processing unit, form letter, and various addresses, the student will demonstrate the ability to keyboard the form letter and addresses and obtain a printouts by a mail-merge basis within the due date.

7. Given a word processing unit, form letter, and a limited number of addresses, the student will demonstrate the ability to keyboard the form letter and perform a fill-in routine using the addresses as variable inserts within the due date.

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METHOD OF INCORPORATION INTO EXISTING OFFICE PRACTICE CLASSES

The Pottstown Senior High School Business Department plans to incorporate the microcomputer into existing office practice classes by the following:

First Marking Period

1. Students will utilize Word/Information Processing Concepts to complete theory worksheets.

2. Students who have no prior experience in word processing will be introduced to the concept by using Bank Street Writer to correct the deficiency.

3. Students will use transcribing machines and typewriters to transcribe letters, reports, and memos.

Second Marking Period

1. Students will continue completing theory worksheets utilizing Word/Information Processing Concepts.

2. Students will use a word processing program Word Handler to complete assignments on entering and editing letters, reports, and memos with and without teacher assistance.

Third Marking Period

1. Students will continue completing theory worksheets utilizing Word/Information Processing Concepts.

2. Students will use Word Handler to complete assignments involving form letters and a fill-in routine using addresses as variable inserts.

3. Students will use List Handler to keyboard addresses into a master mailing list to be stored on disk that can later be used to perform a mail merge.

4. Advanced students will use Microcomputer Accounting Applications to perform general journal/ledger applications.

Fourth Marking Period

1. Students will continue completing theory worksheets using Word/Information Processing Concepts.

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2. Students will use Word Handler and List Handler as an integrated package to perform a mail-merge routine.

3. Students will continue using Word Handler to complete assignments from Word Processing Applications in Practice.

4. Advanced students will continue using Microcomputer Accounting Applications for general journal/ledger applications.

Various Marking Periods

Business Education teachers may utilize the microcomputers to provide initial or supplemental instruction to all, selected, or advanced students during any marking period deemed appropriate by the teacher using the following programs/courseware:

1. Computerized Payroll Procedures
2. Alphabetic Indexing Rules
3. Alphabetic Keyboarding
4. Data Entry Activities

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WORD PROCESSING LEARNING MATERIALS

In addition to the supplies and accounting materials, the following items have been purchased for use by the business education department:

1. Word Information Processing Concepts, Second Edition, South-Western Publishing Company.

2. Word Processing Applications in Practice, Text/Workbook, South-Western.

3. Word Handler, V4.2, Word Processing Program, Advanced Logic Systems.

4. List Handler, File Management Program, Advanced Logic Systems.

5. Mercury Systems, Inc., Word/Info. Processing Practice Set, Gregg-McGraw Hill.

6. Bank Street Writer, Word Processing Program, Scholastic, Incorporated.

ACCOUNTING LEARNING MATERIALS

In addition to the supplies and word processing materials, the following accounting applications have been purchased for use by the business education department:

1. Microcomputer Accounting Applications, program disks, Gregg-McGraw Hill.

2. Microcomputer Accounting Applications, Text/Workbook, Gregg-McGraw Hill.

3. Computerized Payroll Procedures, Program disks & Text/Workbook, South-Western Publishing Company.